Because of these measures, the utilisation of these mills has increased to 81 % by January 2003.

(b) and (c) Revival plan is to be implemented within 2 years w.e.f. 1.4.2002. As per sanctioned scheme, there are no surplus employees in Kerala. Hence, payment of VRS is not envisaged. The Government is committed to successful implementation of the scheme.

Deteriorating state of powerloom industry

918. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the deteriorating state of powerloom industry in the country particularly in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Governments' have formulated any action plan for the revival of this vital sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI BASANGOUDA R. PATIL): (a) and (b)The number of powerlooms in the country has grown to an estimated figure of 16.80 lakh as oh 31.12.2002. This sector contributes about 59% of the total cloth production in the country and providing employment to about 42 lakh persons.

The number of powerlooms in Andhra Pradesh installed during the last three years has been reported as below:

SI.No.	Year (ending on 31st December)	No. of looms installed	No. of workers engaged
1.	2000-01	43,535	1,08,838
2.	2001-02	43,903	1,09,758
3.	2002-03	43,923	1,09,808

(c) and (d) Government has taken several initiatives to facilitate growth of the decentralized powerloom industry. These include:

(i) A programme for induction of 50,000 shuttleless and for 2.50 lakh semi automatic and automatic looms in the decentralised powerloom sector has been announced. Incentives are available under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme where the powerloom owner can either avail 12% upfront Capital Linked

Subsidy or reduce cost of borrowing the capital by interest reimbursement of 5%;

(ii) Forty-four Powerloom Service Centres (PSCs), established to provide services, such as designs, training, skill upgradation and the testing facilities to the powerloom weavers, are being upgraded and equipped with modern looms so as to upgrade the skills of powerloom weavers. Government has approved an outlay of Rs. 36 crores for the Tenth Plan towards modernisation and strengthening of PSCs;

(iii) Seventeen Computer Aided Design Centres in Powerloom Service Centres have been established to facilitate the creation of new designs, and improve design and production;

(iv) Powerloom Export Entitlement (PEE) quota has been provided to encourage powerloom exports; and

(v) In addition a welfare scheme for Insurance is being completed.

Amendment in WTO agreement of textiles and clothing

919. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether even as Brussels is willing to accept India's stand that implementation of two major proposals relating to textile sector does not lead to reopening *or* amendment of the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing;

(b) if so, whether US, Canada have blocked India's proposals relating to textile sector at WTO;

(c) if so, the reason therefor;

(d) how many countries have supported India's proposals on textiles; and

(e) what is the fate of India's proposal at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI BASANGOUDA R. PATIL): (a) to (e) At the Doha Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) held in November, 2001, certain decisions were taken in respect of full and faithful implementation of Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC). These are contained in Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the Decision on Implementation Related Issues